

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1601

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environmental Health, Select

Title: An act relating to the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Brief Description: Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Campbell, Chase, Hudgins, Hunt, Morrell, Upthegrove, McCoy, Santos, Dickerson, Hasegawa, Sells, Schual-Berke, Wood and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Select Committee on Environmental Health: 1/17/08 [DP3S].

Brief Summary of Third Substitute Bill

- Creates the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council.

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Majority Report: The third substitute bill be substituted therefor and the third substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Campbell, Chair; Hudgins, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hailey, Hunt, Morrell, Newhouse and Wood.

Staff: Ashley Pedersen (786-7303).

Background:

Studies have shown that children are more susceptible and more exposed to environmental hazards than adults. Children are particularly vulnerable to such hazards as lead, pesticides, air pollutants, contaminated water, toxic waste, secondhand tobacco smoke, and industrial and home chemicals. As children's bodies and biological systems develop, they are uniquely vulnerable to damage from toxic substances. Children are also more exposed to toxins from the environment, as well as school and homes. Proportional to body weight, children take in far higher concentrations of toxins in the environment than adults.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Third Substitute Bill:

The Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (Council) is created. Membership of the Council consists of 16 people, including members of the Legislature, representatives of several state agencies, a tribal representative, a licensed pediatric health care provider with expertise in the field of children's environmental health, one representative from the academic community involved in research on environmental toxins and human exposure, a board certified human toxicologist, and a board certified environmental toxicologist.

The Council must review and comment on existing laws, rules, regulations, and standards to ensure adequate protection of children's health from environmental hazards, both in Washington and in other states. The Council must also review current research on environmental toxins and exposures, children's environmental health and other research relevant to the protection of children's health from environmental hazards. The State Board of Health must provide staff support to the Council.

The Council must report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2008, and December 1, 2009, with recommendations of changes in regulation that would reduce children's exposure to environmental hazards and recommendations for collaborative approaches to public education. The act expires on June 30, 2010.

The Council must collaborate and coordinate its activities with the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel to ensure that the panel's activities are not duplicated. The Council must also collaborate with state agencies and others, including the Washington Association of School Business Officials and the Washington Association of Maintenance and Operation Administrators, without duplicating current work in this area.

Third Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The third substitute bill deletes the requirement that the Council meet four times a year. It adds the requirement that the Council review the existing laws and rules of other states. It also adds the requirement that the Council work collaboratively with state agencies and others, as well as the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel.

The third substitute bill removes the following individuals from membership on the Council: (1) Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; (2) Director of the Department of Labor and Industries; (3) parent or guardian whose child has been clinically diagnosed with exposure to an environmental health hazard; and (4) an expert in the field of human toxicology.

The third substitute adds the following individuals to membership of the Council: (1) the Director of the Washington Poison Control Center; (2) a board certified human toxicologist; and (3) a board certified environmental toxicologist.

The third substitute changes the dates of reporting to the Governor and Legislature to one year later. It also changes the date that the act expires to one year later.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Third Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill will create order out of the many concerns there are regarding children's health issues. These concerns include: diesel fumes, toys, and mildew in our schools. This bill will create a multi-disciplinary committee of experts to evaluate the rules and regulations that we have in place and provide recommendations. This bill requires collaboration with other entities to ensure that the Council will not duplicate other efforts regarding children's health issues.

(With concerns) The panel membership may not be made up of the most appropriate individuals. There may be people who are more well-suited to the task of reviewing existing laws, rules and regulations to ensure protection of children's health from environmental hazards. A committee of 16 people may not be focused and it might take them a while to accomplish their review. The Council should be reformulated to accomplish a more honest, straight-forward, and scientific view of the problem. This Council may be a duplication of other entities tasked to do such a review. The Department of Health may already have the authority to do a review and may be better suited to the task. The Department of Health may need funding for such a review.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Rolfes, prime sponsor.

(With concerns) Dan Coyne, Crop Life America and Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment; and Heather Hansen, Friends of Farms and Forests.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.